

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Sumy State University (Ukraine)  
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Proceedings

# **STRATEGIC INNOVATIONS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND FOREIGN PHILOLOGY IN CRISIS TIMES**

I International Scientific and Practical Conference

1 June 2024

Sumy State University, Ukraine



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The collection includes scientific materials devoted to current problems in the field of distance teaching and learning in the era of digital technologies, in particular in language pedagogy, media innovations, modern translation, ethnolinguistics, stylistics, methods and methodologies of modern linguistic and literary disciplines. The composition of the collection is scientific research on the preservation of national identity and cultural heritage, intercultural communications, psychological theory and practice, sociological research.

For teachers of higher education institutions, graduate students, students, teachers of secondary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums and colleges, all those interested in socio-humanitarian issues.

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not only in suffering, but also in the intellectual comprehension of the surrounding world as a whole.

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## **STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING PRONUNCIATION ONLINE: SERBIAN EFL LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE**

The unexpected and sudden changes introduced to the educational system due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caused lasting and irreversible reconsideration of the traditional classroom setting making the virtual component almost indispensable even

in the aftermath (Moser et al., 2021). With the re-evaluated role of pronunciation in speech recognition, pronunciation is no longer the most neglected area of English language teaching (Derwing, 2018).

The digital environment offers numerous opportunities for pronunciation practice, the effectiveness of which is yet to be assessed and confirmed. For example, Inceoglu (2020) found that online pronunciation practice benefits fluency and segmental production, but does not improve accent ratings by native speakers. It is only with specifically designed pronunciation training that the production actually improves even in online settings (Martin, 2020). Furthermore, studies report more positive results in face-to-face classroom settings than online (Cralidis & Salley, 2020), with the majority of students expressing a preference for face-to-face pronunciation practice or a combination with online tools (Malpartida, 2023).

The current study aims to investigate the strategies employed by Serbian EFL learners at the tertiary level of education specifically targeted at online pronunciation practice. The study aspires to potentially fill in the gap of existing research and enhance the teaching practice in Serbia in particular, and possibly extend beyond its borders. A total of 105 English-major students at the Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac, Serbia, participated in the study. The sample comprised 57 first-year students and 48 second-year students attending *English Phonetics* and *English Phonology* courses respectively, at B2 and C1 level CEFR. Throughout the courses, the participants were introduced to various methods for practising pronunciation both face-to-face and online.

The primary instrument used for collecting data was a questionnaire specifically designed for the purpose of the present research. It was adapted from several sources, keeping the specific aims and needs of the participants in mind. The questionnaire contained three parts. The first part contained questions related to the participants' biographical data and basic information on English language learning (5 questions related to gender, age, proficiency level, age of onset of learning English and the number of hours spent daily on the Internet). The second part of the questionnaire contained 5-point Likert scale statements related to the pronunciation improvement

strategies employed in educational settings offline. The statements were adapted from the *Strategies for Pronunciation Improvement (SPI) Inventory* (Sardegna, 2012) containing a total of 15 statements in three groups: strategies for improving sounds (items 1-5), strategies for improving polysyllabic words (items 6-10) and strategies improving phrases (items 11-15). The strategies in the former inventory were mostly cognitive, with a few items related to compensation and social strategies. The original inventory was condensed to suit the needs of the present paper since the predominant focus was on pronunciation strategies online. Therefore, the third part of the questionnaire was modified to correspond to Oxford's (1990) framework of learning strategies and it contained a total of 30 5-point Likert scale statements (five per each of the strategies subgroups: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social). The questionnaire was distributed in person and online at the end of the winter semester and the beginning of spring semester 2023/2024 academic year.

The findings of the present study revealed important information about the strategies employed by Serbian English-major students for learning pronunciation. Dominant strategies for pronunciation practise in face-to-face classrooms seem to be the ones directed toward improving individual sounds and intonation. Hence, it can be concluded that both segmental and suprasegmental features are incorporated in their pronunciation instruction. Pertaining to the pronunciation learning strategies online, students from this particular sample seem to prefer cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which is in line with previous research (Alamsari, 2020). Social strategies seem to be less popular which confirms previous findings (Mahalingam & Yunus, 2016; Al-Kanza'leh, 2019). In general, a relatively even distribution of responses was noted for both ends of the scale for the majority of proposed strategies. About 50% of the investigated sample show dominant preference towards strategy implementation. The results underscore significant pedagogical implications related to pronunciation practice in the Serbian EFL context. Considering the frequency of use of smartphones and the Internet in general, structured pronunciation practice using online tools could introduced earlier on in education providing students with more opportunities for strategy development. Furthermore, more attention needs to be paid to the development

of social strategies in particular.

Potentially, the limitations of the present study lie in the chosen sample. A more diverse population, in terms of professional orientation, could have yielded different results. Future studies should focus on comparing the responses of students attending diverse faculties and investigating the benefits of particular online pronunciation tools.

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## **ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ОСВІТНІХ ІНТЕРНЕТ-ПЛАТФОРМ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ**

Онлайн навчання є важливим компонентом сучасного освітнього процесу, що поєднує в собі відеоконференції, консультації, онлайн-уроки, індивідуальну та групову роботу, аудіозаписи тощо. Смірнова-Трибульська (2019) зазначає, що однією з найважливіших переваг є віртуальне середовище, що дозволяє брати